



Weekly Drought Brief Friday, May 16, 2014

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Fire Activity: Wildfire activity has spiked in Southern California amidst drought conditions. Very dry vegetation, combined with unseasonably early Santa Ana winds, catalyzed several major wildfires in San Diego County beginning Tuesday. As of today (Friday, May 16) at 4PM, nine significant fires have burned over 18,000 acres, destroyed dozens of homes and other structures, damaged critical infrastructure and caused the evacuation of thousands of residents. While some neighborhoods adjacent to fires are currently without power, no major interruption to the region's electrical grid is anticipated.

The eight fires include:

- **Pulgas Fire, US Marines Camp Pendleton**, 8,000 acres, 5% contained
- **Tomahawk Fire, US Marines Camp Pendleton**, 6,300 acres, 23% contained
- **Cocos Fire, San Diego County**, 3,018 acres, 10% contained
- **Bernardo Fire, San Diego County**, 1,548 acres, 90% contained
- **Poinsettia Fire, San Diego County**, 600 acres, 85-90% contained
- **Combat Fire, US Marines Camp Pendleton**, 700 acres, 0% contained
- **Highway Fire, San Diego County**, 386 acres, 90% contained
- **River Fire, San Diego County**, 105 acres, 95% contained
- **Freeway Fire, San Diego County**, 56 acres, 100% contained

Temperatures remain very high in the region of the wildfires (up over 100 degrees this afternoon) with wind changing directions very quickly. Cooling temperatures anticipated beginning tomorrow.

CAL FIRE has worked alongside local fire departments, the US Forest Service and the US Marines and Navy to contain these fires. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services has activated the State Operations Center to support incident response. On Wednesday (May 14), Governor Brown declared a [State of Emergency](#) in San Diego County due to danger and damages from these wildfires.

So far this year, state fire crews have battled 1,501 wildfires, which is more than double the year-to-date average of 805 wildfires. In anticipation of these conditions, state government funded additional firefighters, fire engines and firefighting aircraft throughout the state. CAL FIRE has staffed-up much earlier in the season than it normal: Southern California fire stations have already reached peak staffing and Northern California stations are set to reach peak staffing by mid- June.

Recent Precipitation: Very little precipitation fell from Friday, May 9 through Thursday, May 15:

- **Folsom:** 0.00" in the last week. 16.13" since July 1, **72%** of normal by this date.
- **Fresno:** 0.00" in the last week. 4.89" since July 1, **44%** of normal by this date.
- **Hetch Hetchy:** 0.00" in the last week. 19.91" since July 1, **55%** of normal by this date.
- **Los Angeles:** 0.00" in the last week. 5.83" since July 1, **40%** of normal by this date.
- **Modesto:** 0.00" in the last week. 7.00" since July 1, **55%** of normal by this date.
- **Oroville:** 0.00" in the last week. 19.56" since July 1, **64%** of normal this date.
- **Pollock Pines:** 0.32" in the last week. 27.64" since July 1, **53%** of normal by this date.
- **Redding:** 0.00" in the last week. 21.20" since July 1, **64%** of normal by this date.

- **Sacramento:** 0.00" in the last week. 10.26" since July 1, **50%** of normal by this date.
- **Shasta:** 0.00" in the last [week](#). 34.62" since July 1, **55%** of normal by this date.
- **Willits:** 0.04" in the last week. 34.52" since July 1, **70%** of normal by this date. \

Near-term Outlook for Precipitation: Cooler temperatures are expected beginning next week, with a small chance for precipitation. Any precipitation that falls will likely amount to less than half an inch.

Snow survey: The final manual [snowpack survey](#) of the season was conducted on Thursday (May 1) and showed California snowpack at 18% of normal. A more [recent update](#) using automated devices shows snowpack at 9% of normal as of May 16.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): [Reservoir Levels](#) as of May 15 remain low, including: Don Pedro 54%; Exchequer 29%; Folsom Lake 58%; Lake Oroville 51%; Millerton Lake 54%; New Melones 35%; Pine Flat 37%; San Luis 45%; Shasta 51%; and Trinity Lake 51%. An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The California Department of Public Health is providing technical and funding assistance to help several communities facing near-term drinking water shortages and is monitoring water systems across the state to determine where else it can provide support. Updated information can be found at the [CDPH Drinking Water Program](#) website.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM LAST WEEK

- **Bureau of Reclamation updates its water supply allocations:** The US Bureau of Reclamation announced on Tuesday an [increase in its projected allocations](#) to the Bureau's San Joaquin Exchange Contractors and South of Delta wildlife refuges. This action includes [the release of water from Friant Dam](#) to meet obligations to these water contractors.
- **Emergency water curtailments for Sacramento river tributaries:** On Tuesday (May 20) the State Water Board will hold a hearing to consider [proposed emergency rulemaking](#) that would require curtailments on water diversions if minimum flows are not met in three Sacramento River tributaries (Mill Creek, Deer Creek and Antelope Creek). Updated information on water curtailments can be found on the Water Board's [curtailment webpage](#).
- **Voluntary drought Initiative for landowners:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries announced [a voluntary drought program](#) on Wednesday that allows water users in certain watersheds to enter into individual agreements with these agencies to help maintain enough water for fish habitats without having their water use curtailed.
- **US Interior Department announces drought-related support for California:** Interior Secretary Sally Jewell announced yesterday (Thursday) that the [Bureau of Reclamation will invest \\$20 million](#) in nine water reclamation and reuse projects in CA that increase availability of recycled water. These [nine projects](#) are led by local water agencies to reclaim and reuse municipal, industrial, domestic or agricultural wastewater.
- **Drought impacts study to be released:** A study undertaken by the University of California--Davis will be released this coming week that estimates economic impacts from the current drought. This report was commissioned by the California Department of Food and Agriculture

and will help to guide drought response by state agencies. Information on the study can be found once it is released on the Agriculture Department's [drought webpage](#).

- **Foundation support for drought response:** Cal Volunteers, state government's lead agency on philanthropic and volunteer efforts, met today (Friday) with the League of California Community Foundations. Cal Volunteers will provide an overview of recent meetings with community-based organizations in Salinas and Fresno that explored current drought impacts to vulnerable communities. Cal Volunteers and community foundations are currently exploring how foundations can help reduce harm from the drought in California communities.
- **Emergency food aid:** The California Department of Social Services has provided over 16,000 boxes of food to counties impacted by the drought. This food aid, enabled by emergency drought legislation passed in March, is targeted toward residents economically impacted by the drought. The Department is working with local food banks to ensure that each food bank has a plan to outreach to those individuals and families most impacted by the drought.
- **Water conservation campaign in full swing:** The state's water conversation campaign, [Save Our Water](#), has billboards and radio ads in place throughout the state to publicize the importance of reducing water use. This [Californian's Don't Waste campaign](#) has picked up considerable media and [social media](#) interest.
- **Cost Data:** Cal OES continues to gather drought-related costs from state agencies and local governments, which is reported weekly to the Drought Taskforce.
- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Taskforce continues to meet daily to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 43 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **Counties:** Glenn, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, San Joaquin, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yuba
 - **Cities:** Brooktrails Township-Mendocino County, City of Willits-Mendocino County, City of St. Helena-Napa County, City of Calistoga-Napa County, City of American Canyon-Napa County, City of Santa Barbara-Santa Barbara County, City of Montague-Siskiyou County, City of Live Oak-Sutter County
 - **Tribes:** Hoopa Valley Tribe in Humboldt County, Yurok Tribe in Del Norte County, Tule River Indian Tribe in Tulare County, Karuk Tribe in Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties, Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation
 - **Special Districts:** Lake Don Pedro Community Services District, Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), Twain Harte Community Services District, Carpinteria Valley Water District, Sonoma County Water Agency, Meiners Oaks Water District, Mariposa Public Utility District, Montecito Water District, Goleta Water District, Tuolumne Utilities District, Nevada Irrigation District

- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** The Association of California Water Agencies [has identified](#) several hundred local water agencies that have implemented water conservation actions. These water agencies [are responding to the drought](#) by implementing conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water usage and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.
- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 24 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.

DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Drought.CA.Gov](#): California's Drought Information Clearinghouse

Governor's [Proclamation of Drought Emergency](#)
 State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save our Water](#)
 Local Government [Clearinghouse and Toolkit](#)
 California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought information](#)
 California Department of Water Resources [Current Water Conditions](#)
 California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)
 California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
 California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
 California Department of Public Health, Drinking Water [CDPH Drinking Water Program](#)
 California State Water Project, [Information](#)
 USDA Drought Designations by County [CA County Designations](#)
 USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information [USDA Programs](#)
 Small Business Administration Disaster Support: www.sba.gov/disaster